

Morgantown Green Team

Meeting Notes 9/4/13 Action items are in **bold**.

Attendees: Chris Haddox, Liz Wiles (FODC), Rich Dennis, Ella Belling (Mon River Trails Conservancy), Mark Glass (Downstream Strategies), Kendra Hatcher (Downstream Strategies), Jeff Simcoe (Downstream Strategies), Bill Kawecki (Morgantown City Council), Anthony Pecoraro (WVU Student), Trevor Llyod (City of Morgantown)

Introductions

The topic of the injection well came up as a possible Green Night topic, but the team decided that was not the right venue at this time. However, we want to know more, so we are having this presentation for the team tonight. We did write a letter to the City Manager raising concern about hydrofracking (approximately 2011). We may want to take this topic to the City eventually.

Presentation: *Fracking Wastewater Underground Injection Well Proposed for the Deckers Creek Watershed*
by Liz Wiles of Friends of Deckers Creek

Background

- FODC met with three reps from Energy Corporation of America (ECA) on 5/3/13. ECA provided information on the proposed project to repurpose a conventional gas well to a Class II underground injection control (UIC) well for wastewater from regional fracking operations.

Information on Well: History

- 1973-2006
- 7000 ft depth deeper than where they take it out

Information on Well: Location

- less than 1 mile northwest of Masontown ~100 meters uphill from rail trail ~150 meters uphill from Deckers Creek; immediately upstream from the Deckers Creek gorge area.
- This summer they have been doing feasibility tests. This fall, permitting process. Winter, design and construction. Goal to have it up in Spring of 2014.

FODC Points of Concern

The main concern is that the project goes completely against FODC mission which is to improve the natural qualities of, increase public concern for, and promote the enjoyment of the Deckers Creek Watershed. This project could do real and lasting damage to the Deckers Creek.

1. Investment. >\$9.5 million invested by many agencies, citizens, and businesses. Much money and much time has been invested in improving the watershed. Remediating acid mine drainage, eliminating pollution, health of creek species. This well poses a threat to that investment. Water quality has been improving, fish and insect populations are coming back.
2. Groundwater. Potential leaks from storage tanks or ponds, or failure of site impoundments. There has been much evidence throughout the region that impoundments can leak and sometimes they fail. Example: Lochbelly. Often impoundments are made on tops of hillsides, and there is evidence that many of them fail due to landslides. Groundwater can also be affected by accidental or unlawful spills from wastewater delivery trucks. Example: Wetzel County. Spills and leaks from injection manifolds or well casings and failure of well casings. Class II UIC Wells increasing over the years. 2010: 6,958. Initially, the casings fail 6% of the time. Eventually, they all fail.
3. Geology. Evidence shows that UI wells are causing earthquakes. *Scientific American* July 12, 2013 "Injection Wells Spawn Powerful Earthquakes." Area near site is sandstone and limestone. The well casing will go through sandstone which will allow the fluid from leaks to travel to water.
4. Brine. List of parameters tested in fracking wastewater. Many toxic chemicals, carcinogenic chemicals, and radioactivity.

5. Trucks. Increased traffic through Masontown, crossing the rail trail, crossing the creek. Estimated 10-12 trucks a day according to the ECA. This will most likely increase over time.
6. Recreation. Estimated number of trail uses in 2001: 109,000. This has increased. People who fish have noticed significant increase in the kinds of fish they catch.
7. Volatility of gases. Explosions. ECA has little experience operating such wells. This is only the second on, the first one is in Montana and has only been operating since February.

Inevitable industrial threat to a natural and recreational area. Impact on years and funds invested in Deckers Creek Watershed.

Where will the wastewater come from? How many other wells are in the region? ECA has a number (several thousand) of old conventional gas wells in the state. There are none in this area at this time. West Virginia is an importer of fracking wastewater at this time. Why here? Easy access, deep reservoir, and huge reservoir.

Next Steps

Important message is that FODC is opposed to this well at this site.

1. Letters to ECA
2. Letters to elected officials
3. If/when permit application goes in, letters to DEP

FODC has a petition for individuals to sign.

Discussion

- Need to flesh out data and information in order to make a convincing argument in any official capacity. Financial impact, health impacts. Is this bringing any economic benefit to Masontown or the region? What is the actual volume of the reservoir? 10 trucks a day is 50,000 gallons a day. What is the capacity? How long will they be hauling wastewater there? 20-50 years? Who invests in the road to make it possible to accommodate all this traffic? Several UIC wells operate in Preston County.
- Additional concern: there is a lot of variation in the fluids from different locations. How all the different chemicals in the different fluids injected will react is not known. This is supposed to be tested, but generally isn't.
- Idea: use the economic benefit study of the cleanup of DC watershed. Careful analogy to Dunkard Creek.

September Green Night: 9/19/13 at the Library. Safe and Sustainable Routes to Schools in Morgantown Christiaan Abildso....Pedestrian Safety Board will speak (pending confirmation). I'm going to the Bike Board meeting tonight to see if anyone from that entity wants to speak. I'll send the press release out on the email list for feedback tomorrow then send it to Pam.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 3, 2013, 5:30 pm, City Council Chambers, 389 Spruce Street

Notes submitted by Barbara Walker

Some items from past notes we may want to add to future agenda:

- We discussed the problem of lack of recycling by the downtown businesses. There is not enough space for garbage or recycling. We need to find out what other cities with similar issues do about this. No-one has time to pick up this issue right now.
- Creation of "Idea Hopper." This would be a table or simple database where we can document ideas and problems /opportunities that cannot be picked up right away by anyone in the group. We can document the issue, obstacles, and possible actions so that if any individuals or groups become available and would like ideas for projects, they can consider the projects in the Idea Hopper. **We need someone to spearhead the creation of the Idea Hopper.**
- Energy Committee Update
- Aaron briefly discussed a proposal for solarized Morgantown to gauge interest. This is by a WV-based non-profit organization that has worked in DC, MD, and VA on Community Power Network

(<http://communitypowernetwork.com/>). The goal of the proposal is to make it easier and more affordable for residents to install solar equipment. **Aaron will get more information.** Dan Conet is the POC.

- Farmer's Market Solar Array online production monitor will soon be operating.
- Green Buildings initiative, including the North Side Fire Station, and work on a brochure for builders.
- Promoting The Year Of Its Easy Being Green.
- Outreach to the business community to identify opportunities and obstacles to green businesses.
- "GreenWelcome" brochure with info to new residents on how to practice green living in Morgantown – Pam Cubberly said she would like to help, or take the lead on this
- The Pedestrian Safety Board would like to meet with the Green Team to develop pedestrian safety plans. POC is Ella Belling.
- Future Green Nights:
 - September – Safe and Sustainable Routes to Schools
 - October – Morgantown Tree Board and the Year Of The Tree
 - November – Home energy efficiency and weatherization
 - January – Recycling;
 - April – Resource Fair with Lisa Lagana